

MARY YOU WILL BAKES



Jane D'Sa 2025





MARY LOU WILLIAMS AT THE COOKERY NOVEMBER 1975

MARY LOU WILLIAMS LIVE AT THE COOKERY

1. Praise The Lord (Williams) 5:55
2. Blues For Peter (Williams) 6:56
3. I Can't Get Started (Duke) 5:54
4. Roll 'Em (Williams) 6:33
5. The Jeep Is Jumping (Hodges-Ellington) 3:50
6. My Funny Valentine (Rodgers-Hart) 5:26
7. Waltz Boogie (Williams) 3:23
8. The Surrey With The Fringe On Top (Rodgers-Hammerstein) 4:42
9. The Man I Love (Gershwin-Gershwin) 5:58*
10. All Blues (Davis) 4:47*
11. Mack The Knife (Weill) 5:11*
12. A Grand Night For Swinging (Taylor) 7:52

Mary Lou Williams, piano. Brian Torff, bass
Recorded live at The Cookery, New York City, throughout
November 1975

*Previously unissued.

Produced By: Hank O'Neal

Cover Design: John DeVries

Recording: Downtown Sound Remote Original edit and remix:
Fred Miller Digital remix, edit and transfer: Jon Bates

Assistant Engineers: Borah Bergman, Maggie Condon, John
DeVries, Peter O'Brien, Rollo Phlecks and Brian Torff

Photography: Inlay Card, Ole Brask; Booklet, Rollo Phlecks

We tipped our hat to Barney Josephson on the liner of the original
issue of this recording. He deserved it then and deserves it now.
Thanks, Barney.

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COMPACT
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DIGITAL AUDIO

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PRODUCER'S NOTES

(1976)

In the winter of 1969–70, long before Chiaroscuro Records ever existed, I was casting about, looking for sensible projects on which to spend the few dollars I had in the bank. I went to see John Hammond, who was tolerating an extended engagement at Lenox Hill Hospital and asked him what he felt might be the best project with which I could involve myself. Without any hesitation he said simply, "Record Mary Lou Williams."

I always pay attention to what John has to say, whether it has to do with who to record or a particular article in *The New Republic*, and scooted right down to *The Cookery*, where Mary was in the process of helping Barney Josephson reestablish his long time policy of good jazz and food. I talked with Peter O'Brien and Mary about a record. Everyone was agreeable and a lot of hard work emerged as CR 103, *From the Heart*, an album of solo treatments of Mary's own compositions.

In early October 1975 I started gearing up to make this live recording of Mary at *The Cookery*. She had a three month run and I thought it might be very worthwhile to capture Mary in live surroundings. After all the arrangements were made I called John Hammond and told him I planned to undertake the live recording. Again, he said simply, "That's the most important thing you can do right now." Of course, he was right.

Things change fast in New York City; the biggest craze of yesterday rests securely today in every crazed crazy's garbage can, forlorn

and forgotten with the Pet Rocks and worse. But mixed in with all the hype and nonsense there are a few constants, and Mary Lou Williams remains one of the most significant constants; equally good in 1926 or 1976, representing all that is the very best in creative American music.

(1991)

One of my greatest regrets about the Chiaroscuro recordings I produced in the 1970s is that only three featured Mary Lou Williams. The first, CR 103, was a solo album; this reissue is a duo and in 1973 she was featured prominently on CR 124, *Buddy Tate and His Buddies*. I don't remember why I didn't manage to get her into the studio for more recording; it was possibly just a combination of circumstances, but clearly I should have tried harder.

Mary Lou Williams was one of the finest jazz artists; her musical prowess was extraordinary but, more importantly, by the 1970's she had not only lived and played through ninety-percent of the history of recorded jazz but had absorbed virtually all the most important developments of the music into her playing, arrangements and composition. Over the course of her life Mary Lou grew musically more than anyone I've ever encountered. Listen to her first recorded solos, *Night Life* and *Drag 'em*, and then listen to her last work in the early 1980's. The musicality in all her work, old, new or in the middle somewhere, is nothing short of astounding, but her extraordinary technical facility pales before her unprecedented growth and ability to absorb all that was new and good and vital,

seemingly as it happened. Some of the most revered instrumentalists and composers in jazz changed very little over the course of their careers; they developed a voice early on and kept using it. Mary Lou Williams had a vigorous style that served her well from the beginning, but hers was a voice that simply became more musical, broader and even stronger as the years went by until finally it surpassed not only her older contemporaries, but many of her younger contemporaries as well. Mary Lou Williams' career was exceptional and I'm honored to have been present during the recording of the music presented on this CD.



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ORIGINAL LINER NOTES (1976)

Mary Lou Williams, pianist-composer-arranger, is the only major jazz artist who has lived through all the eras in the history of jazz and played the new music of each era. In 1927 she made her first recordings with John Williams' Synco Jazzers, and nearly fifty years later she is in the forefront of jazz pianists, as fresh as tomorrow. In between she was a solid part of the big band era, playing with Andy Kirk and His Twelve Clouds of Joy and writing arrangements for Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington, Jimmy Lunceford, the Dorsey Brothers and a host of others. She easily made the transition from the swing era to the modern music that was being developed by Dizzy Gillespie, Thelonious Monk and Bud Powell in the forties and still maintains close friendships with all of the living innovators of that period. Miss Williams began composing extended works during this period of ferment in American music and her Zodiac Suite was performed by the New York Philharmonic in 1946. In 1954 Miss Williams entered a phase of her life that revolved around her extraordinary religious faith that partially obscured her musical interests. During this period she created a foundation for needy musicians, did enormous amounts of work among the poor, ran musical workshops in storefronts and composed a great deal of sacred music, including three masses. This music has been performed throughout the world and recently Mary Lou's mass was performed in St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City before the largest audience ever to be assembled in this famous church. In 1970 Miss Williams burst again upon the jazz scene with an even

increased vitality, and since that time her musical activities have been at a frantic pace; she produced three exceptional records on her own label, Mary Records, and this is her second solo album for Chiaroscuro. In addition, she has been awarded five honorary degrees from various universities in the last two years and a street is permanently named in her honor in Kansas City. All of this adds up to a marvelously creative woman, who is increasingly innovative every day of her life.

Peter O'Brien



PETER O'BRIEN
AS ASSISTANT ENGINEER



MARY LOU WILLIAMS, BRIAN TORFF

The photographs in this booklet and on the inlay card were taken at The Cookery on one of the days we recorded. Mary Lou had asked a group of children from a school she assisted to come by for hamburgers, sodas and song. Rollo Phlecks and Ole Brask were also there. These cheerful photographs show one aspect of Mary Lou's wonderful personality.

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CR(D) 146
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